



Issue No. 6

GOSPORT RECORDS

GOSPORT - a ballad.

Music by Richard Leveridge. Words by Henry Man (1747-1799)

I sing not of Naples, of Venice, of Rome, Of the pillar of Trajan, or
 Peter's fine dome; Neither praise I old Brentford, that place of renown, But will sing of
 a seaport, and Gosport's the town, Derry down, down, down, derry down.

If the streets were more clean, you'd walk more at your ease,
 But, believe me, the mud is quite up to your knees:
 Which, though not quite so pleasant as meadows and lawns,
 Is convenient enough, since it's soft to the corns.
 Derry down, etc.

Then all those who're oblig'd to walk out in the night,
 Can't complain of the lamps, that they give a bad light,
 That the oil is too bad, or the wicks are too small,
 I'll be curst if they can, for there's no light at all.

Derry down, etc. (Continued on back cover) —

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CONTENTS

	Page
Gosport - A Ballad 	Cover
Foreword 	3
There are Six Taverns in the Town	4
O.E.C. Lees Lane 	12
Gosport's Last Gamekeeper	15
Defence of Stokes Bay against the Spanish Armada Part III ..	17
Street Names 	22
Historic Homes No. 6 - National Children's Home ..	26
Grave Mishaps 	28
Sources 	32

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FOREWORD

With this Issue "Gosport Records" enters its third year of publication. This magazine, to date, has offered its readers a wide field of subjects covering Gosport's fascinating history and has stimulated, by its articles and illustrations, growing interest and pride in "Our Town". At the same time it is providing for the new generation, who will be so occupied with the implementation of the recent plans for future development of this area, an authentic record of life in Gosport over the centuries.

This Issue maintains the high standard of presentation of subject matter of wide appeal set by its predecessors. Continuing interest is to be found in "The Defence of Stokes Bay against the Spanish Armada", "Historic Homes" and "Grave Mishaps". In addition, you may exercise your imagination by dropping in for refreshment at one of the many "Locals" at the time of the Press Gangs - or stir your memory (or imagination according to age) of Gosport-built motorcycles "revving up" in Lees Lane.

As stated in the foreword of this magazine's first Issue, one of the objects of the Historic Records and Museum Society is "to see that in the inevitable process of rebuilding and reconstruction of the town, care is taken to preserve what is worthwhile in its long history". Some contribution has been made to this, as you will read in "Street Names", by the careful thought given by members of this Society in naming the roads for the new building development at Clayhall. Interests of the past are thus being linked with the future life of that area.

It is with regret that Members of the Gosport Historic Records and Museum Society learn that Alderman H. T. Rogers has expressed his wish to relinquish the post of Chairman of the Editorial Sub-Committee of "Gosport Records". Such a magazine was his idea and the publication of its first six Issues has been very demanding of time and energy. All concerned with "Gosport Records" express admiration and gratitude for the inspiration, enthusiasm and hard work of Alderman Rogers. This is yet one more service he has rendered in the interests of his home town of Gosport.

C. J. WASHINGTON

There are six taverns in the town

(but in 1800 there were 70)

by H. T. Rogers



I am often asked what Gosport was really like in the late 18th Century. Were there really all those pubs ? There were indeed and many other things as well. Today about 1350 people live in the area between the Town Hall and the harbour, mainly in high storey flats. It is difficult now to realise that during the Napoleonic Wars a population of over 6000 lived, worked and died, crammed into the same square quarter mile within the old ramparts.

Sailors, soldiers, housewives, post-captains, warrant-officers, boatbuilders, shopkeepers, attorneys, and many crafts which have long since disappeared - soapboilers, slop-fellers, muffin-men, blockmakers, china-menders, etc. Women outnumbered the men by about three to two and as one old writer delicately put it in 1803 "at Gosport the Nymphs of the Sea and the Oceanides and Nereides of South-Street and Rimes-Alley form no inconsiderable portion of their number".

Add to this nearly seventy alehouses, three coach-houses, two theatres, a bridewell, three breweries, two flour mills, fourteen bakehouses, an iron foundry, malthouses, warehouses and wharves and you get some idea of the busy scene.

The main centre of activity was on Gosport Beach. Several hundred watermen plied for hire across the harbour and to the Royal Navy at Spithead. There was trade to be done with the crowded prison hulks anchored off-shore, and it was easier to carry goods to Alverstoke and Hardway by boat. Fishing smacks sold their catch on the hard, crippled seamen, discharged from Haslar Hospital without pay, begged for a living, and French Prisoners-of-War on parole from Forton hawked ornaments made from mutton bones for pocket money.

Erasmus Carver, the ship owner whose office was on the Green and who sold guns and captured French brandy to African Chiefs in exchange for slaves to take to America, seems a legendary figure from an historic novel today. Yet both he and his skipper Peter Bostock were real live characters who were as well known in the streets of Charlestown as they were in the SHIP INN in Quay Lane in Gosport.

More affluent citizens had houses in Coldharbour and Upper

Middle Street (High Street) and a decade ago it was still possible to see their wonderful bow windows and elaborately carved doorways. Traders lived over their shops, but the vast majority of the populace had to eke out an existence in no fewer than 104 back alleys. Many of these alleys had narrow entrances with iron gates to keep out the Press Gang and would widen out into courtyards containing a number of tenements. These were usually just two rooms often housing a dozen or more persons. There would be one earth privy in each yard and a well a few feet away. Many courts had escape ways into other alleys, and once a man was on the run he could disappear into the maze and rarely be found.

Some of the better courtyards with more enlightened landlords remained until a few years ago - SWEET'S ROW, BURNHAM PLACE, NEAL'S COURT. Others such as BROWN'S YARD, HARLEM PLACE, CROWN COURT are better forgotten. No pavements, no lighting, no sanitation; no wonder the people died. No wonder they flocked to the ale-houses. The Reverend David Bogue might thunder damnation from the pulpit of the Independent Chapel but the masses wanted to drown their sorrows.

Facing the beach were THE ISLE OF WIGHT HOY, THE PHOENIX, THE UNION, (named after the Act of Union with Ireland in 1801), THE CITY OF DUBLIN, THE HARE AND HOUNDS, THE TWO SAWYERS, THE CROSS KEYS, THE NAVY TAVERN, THE THREE GUNS (which changed its



The Old Red Lion - Market Road



Gosport High Street, 1900. The old Northumberland behind horse tram and the Isle of Wight Hoy on the left

name to THE THREE TUNS after the Board of Ordnance had objected to its shield being used as a pub sign), THE QUEEN'S ARMS and THE OLD CRISPIN.

Publicans would vie with one another in the splendour and colour of their signs. Many believed in keeping up with the times such as the landlord of the FLOATING DOCK who changed the name to the FLOATING BRIDGE when that new method of crossing the harbour came into being.

Gosport as a naval and military town had many proud patriotic signs - THE AUDACIOUS AND REVOLUTIONAIRE, THE BUNKER'S HILL, THE RODNEY'S ENGAGEMENT, THE BULWARK, and after 1805 the inevitable LORD NELSON. One I like particularly was THE MEDIATOR AND PRIZES which stood in Bemisters Lane. Some signs would indicate the trade guilds which met there. Thus THE OLD CRISPIN (shoemakers), THE TWO SAWYERS (carpenters) and THE BLACKSMITH'S ARMS, which incidentally was the last inn in old Gosport to have a skittle alley. THE ROEBUCK and THE HIGHLANDER were a type of early music hall each offering entertainment of a rather dubious kind. Masonic Lodges met at THE ISLE OF WIGHT HOY, THE SEAHORSE and THE INDIA ARMS. One Lodge in its passion for secrecy insisted on the walls and floors being stuffed with sawdust nearly asphyxiating the members when one night a spark from a fire got under the floor boards.

In an age when people were illiterate it was the custom to

hang out trade signs. Publicans had been required by law to do so from the time of Richard II. Many would stick to easily recognisable symbols in much the same way that emerging African Nations distinguish political parties on voting papers today. Hence the LION, DRAGON, STAR, BEAR, ANCHOR, CROWN, etc. Sometimes colours were used to signify which political party met there, i.e. the Whigs or the Tories - THE BLUE LION as against THE RED LION. Some landlords would regard their sign as their own personal property and take it with them when they moved premises. One can find, for example, a WHITE HART in three different places in as many years.

The ale was fairly potent at 3d a quart. In January 1778 one Isaac Carter declares he saw a "monstrosity" in the passage of the KINGS ARMS after cutting down a woman suicide who had hanged herself. It was sitting between her left breast and shoulder, "much like a human being; and sitting on his haunch it seemed tall enough to lounge the right arm on the head of its victim, and the left on its knee; its colour was not jet black; but dun; its eyes not preposterously large, and in appearance as the sun eclipsed; or seen through a dense mist, like blood". Possibly the night air had something to do with it. On the other hand it might have been a genuine ghost, so if you want to test it, try standing at the bottom of High Street one dark night. (Ed. Of course you can't buy beer like that these days). On retreating to get his gun Carter states that it disappeared.

Now that THE BELL, originally THE BLUE BELL, has been sadly demolished, only six public houses are open today in the old town area, and of these five date back to the 18th Century. Traces of some of the others remain although the old ARTICHOKE has been swept away to make room for a car park. Incredibly the Tap Room of THE DOLPHIN in North Street is still there, but derelict, and will soon come down. The Inn itself was pulled down over seventy years ago. The most famous of all, THE INDIA ARMS, so tied up in local history and worth an article on its own, has now gone, but the old archway through which the Express Coach left daily at 8 a.m. for London remains and must be preserved.

THE GEORGE AND DRAGON, the sole survivor of all the inns to the south of High Street, still occupies the site it did in 1784 on the corner of Bemisters Lane, although the building itself has changed. Known to seamen the world over as a last port of call on the way back to Fort Blockhouse it belonged at one time to Goodeve's Brewery, which stood close by in Haslar Street and finished up as a laundry.

THE CASTLE TAVERN has an interesting history. In 1778 the old fort on Gosport beach known as Charles Fort was no longer required and empty and a number of persons, including Erasmus Carver, were making use of it quite illegally for storehouses. One enterprising gentleman, Mr. Thomas Morgan, had turned part

of it into a beerhouse, paying the Storekeeper of the Board of Ordnance at Portsmouth 10/- a year as acknowledgement. In 1782, after a long legal battle, the Board regained possession and advertised the premises on lease to the highest bidder. Mr. Thomas Whitcomb, Brewer, became the tenant at a more realistic rental of £110 per annum.

During the Napoleonic Wars the fort was again occupied by troops, but by this time Whitcomb had erected THE CASTLE TAVERN immediately adjacent to the walls of the fort. When the war ended the fort was demolished and the stones used to make up the roads. Some Dutch sailors are reputed to have taken a number of the stones to build a house in Chapel Row, but this too has gone. THE CASTLE TAVERN, however, still stands with a new front but inside much the same as Thomas Whitcomb built it.

THE STAR INN. Originally an alehouse with the rather curious name ROYAL HOSPITAL stood close to this site, and shortly after 1800 the landlords, Mr. and Mrs. Rose, decided to build a new hotel, possibly to compete with THE CROWN and THE INDIA ARMS as the principal hostel in the town. It was to have its COFFEE ROOM and ASSEMBLY ROOMS and one has only to look up at its first and second floors to see what a magnificent sight it must have presented in its heyday with the stage-coach leaving for Southampton every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 4 p.m., the guard sounding his horn as the horses came through the arch. For some years the two inns continued close to each other, THE ROYAL HOSPITAL becoming a kind of Tap Room for the coachmen and ostlers while THE STAR catered for passengers and wealthier customers.

By 1820 the older inn had disappeared and I have been unable to pin-point the exact site. There is a theory that both inns faced the High Street, but I believe that THE ROYAL HOSPITAL must have stood behind THE STAR as the archway has always given access to buildings at the rear. Years ago some old cottages stood there.



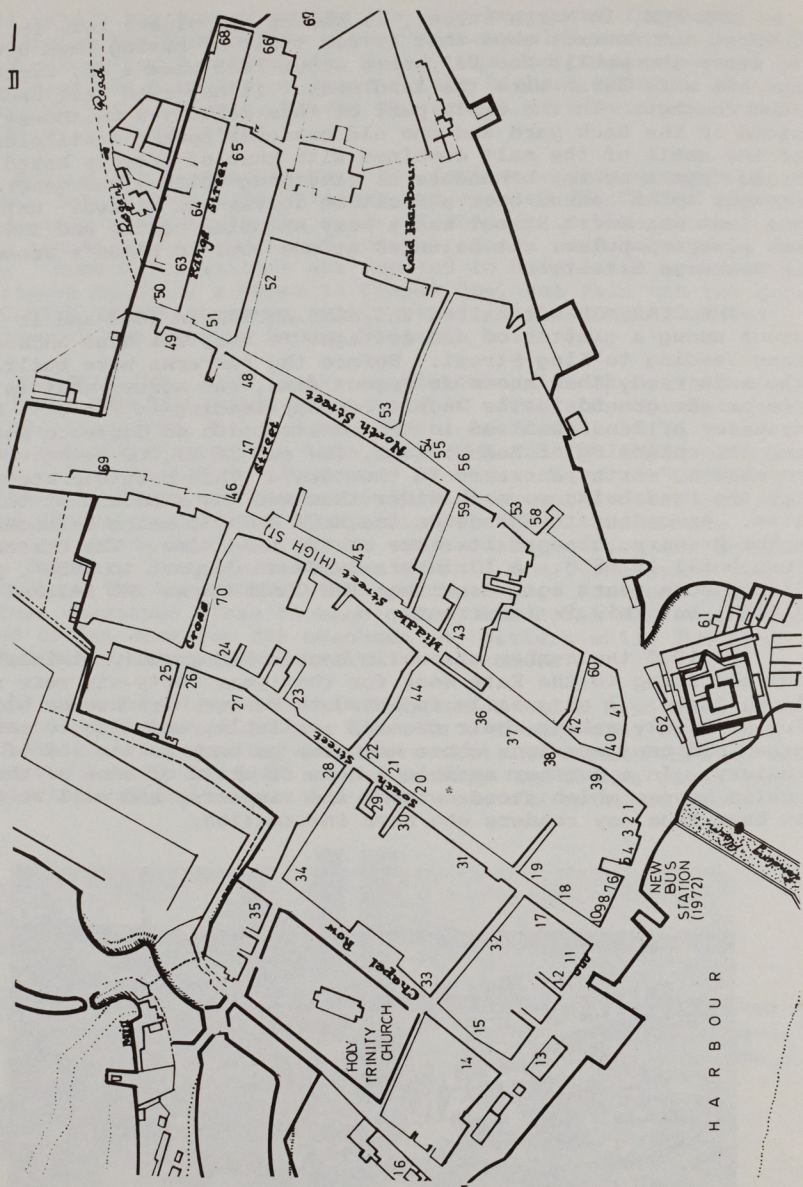
THE DOLPHIN in North Street was pulled down in 1899 but the old Tap Room still stands to-day although derelict.

THE FOX, in North Street, is one of the oldest inns in Gosport and records show that it can boast of having been open to serve the public for 237 years since 1735 when a Mr. Barham and his wife Sarah were the landlords. It may even date back much further. In the early part of this century a malthouse stood in the back yard and one old customer speaks nostalgically of the smell of the malt combined with that of freshly baked bread from a nearby bakehouse as something which a new generation brought up on canned beer and sliced loaves has missed. Until the last war North Street was a busy shopping centre and THE FOX was always popular. It belonged at one time to Biden's Brewery in Seahorse Street.

THE CLARENCE was called THE BLUE ANCHOR in 1800 and it stood among a cluster of old cottages in what was Blue Anchor Lane leading to King Street. Before the barracks were built, the main road, then known as Regent Road, ran across what is now the parade ground to the Double Gateway leading to Forton. A transfer of land resulted in the construction of Clarence Road and the enclosing of Regent Road, the sum of £1,000 being voted to make a "worthy entrance to the town". This possibly accounts for the road being so much wider than was the standard at that time. According to the deeds the BLUE ANCHOR, which belonged to Hobbs Brewery, changed its name at the same time. The barracks were built in 1858. A 'Drinkers Guide to Gosport in 1850', published some years ago, describes THE CLARENCE as THE RAILWAY TAVERN, but this is incorrect.

By 1900 the number of public houses had greatly diminished, but according to the Rate Book for that year forty-six were still in business. I am greatly indebted to Messrs. Brickwoods Ltd. for so kindly making their records available, and also to some grand old nonagenarians whose memories go back to the end of last century. In a further article I hope to write of some of the public houses which stood outside the ramparts, and will be glad to hear from any readers who have information.





1. ISLE OF WIGHT HOY	21. PRINCESS ROYAL	43. OLD RUNNER	65. JOLLY WATERMAN
2. THE PHOENIX	22. GEORGE AND DRAGON	44. MEDIATOR AND PRIZES	66. THE MITRE
3. THE THREE GUNS (later THREE TUNS)	23. SCOTCH ARMS*	45. ROYAL HOSPITAL (later STAR INN)	67. DUKE OF YORK
4. THE UNION	24. Unknown (later THE ROBI HOOD AND LITTLE JOHN)	46. OLD BLUE BELL (later THE BELL)	68. BLUE ANCHOR
5. CITY OF DUBLIN	25. BLACKSMITH'S ARMS	47. BLACK BEAR	69. Unknown (probably FARMER'S GLORY)
6. HARE AND HOUNDS	26. THE BUGLE	48. FOX TAVERN	70. Unknown (probably THE WHITE HORSE)
7. TWO SAWYERS	27. YORKSHIRE GREY	49. CROWN HOTEL	
8. THE CROSS KEYS (later PIER HOTEL)	28. KING OF PRUSSIA	50. DOLPHIN HOTEL	
9. NAVY TAVERN	29. LITTLE RED LION	51. WHITE LION	
10. QUEEN'S HEAD	30. RODNEY'S ENGAGEMENT	52. THE SEAHORSE	
11. OLD CRISPIN	31. BUNKER'S HILL	53. PLANKY'S HEAD	
12. FLOATING DOCK (later FLOATING BRIDGE)	32. OLD KING'S HEAD	54. PLANKY'S HEAD	
13. THE BLOOMING BLOCK*	33. BULWARK	55. SUN TAVERN	
14. THE BLOOMING BLOCK*	34. HASLAR TAVERN	56. BRITISH TAR*(later LORD NELSON)	
15. THE SWAN	35. ANGEL TAVERN	57. GREEN DRAGON	
16. AUDACIOUS AND REVOLUTIONAIRE*	36. HIGHLANDER	58. BLACK LION	
17. NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE	37. EAST INDIA ARMS	59. QUEEN'S HEAD	
18. WHITE HART	38. ROEBUCK	60. WATERMAN'S ARMS	
19. GOLDEN CENTURION	39. KING'S ARMS	61. SHIP INN*	
20. THE ARTICHOKE	40. OLD NORTHUMBERLAND	62. CASTLE TAVERN	
	41. RED LION	63. BLACK DOG	
	42. BULL'S HEAD*(later ROYAL OAK)	64. ROYAL COOPERAGE	

On the above map of Gosport drawn in 1800 we have endeavoured to show the exact sites of the old inns as they existed at the time. We cannot guarantee complete accuracy as many of the signs when the premises changed hands, roads were not numbered in those days, and in the case of the above sites have been checked in old deeds and confirmed in Rosebery's and in the plan of a "Drinker's Guide to Gosport in 1850" published a few years ago makes an interesting comparison but it must be remembered that there is a fifty year lapse between that plan and this map and some of the public houses shown on the plan were not built at the time the map was drawn in 1800. The position of some of the old inns completely defeated our researches but we have been able to show the streets where they were in the 'Unlocated' list above. They may well be duplications of the same inns under another name. Where there is some doubt we have marked with a star.

CHART OF THE GOSPORT OLD PUBLIC HOUSES IN 1800

O.E.C. Lees Lane

by Ralph Venables

Until recent years, when the Rickman brothers set up business in New Milton, the only motorcycles ever to have been manufactured in Hampshire were the famous O.E.C. machines. A product of the Osborn Engineering Co., these two-wheelers (and occasionally three-wheelers) took their place in history as among the most unorthodox machines to have come from any British factory.

Under the directorship of Frederick Osborn and Frederick Wood, this company was formed in 1919, and the old United Aircraft's premises in Lees Lane, Gosport, were acquired for the manufacture of O.E.C. motorcycles.

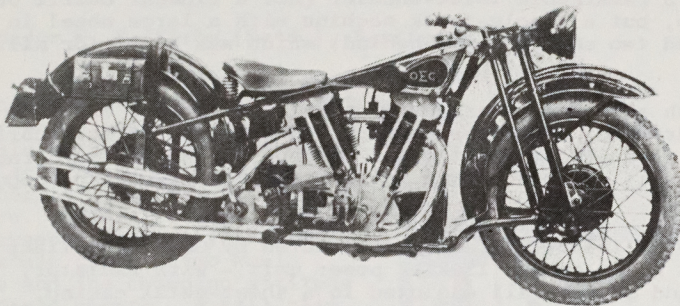
Frederick Osborn had built his first machine in 1901 - a track-racing motorcycle powered by a 4 h.p. Auto-Motor mounted on the front down tube of the lightweight frame. He had earlier made a name for himself as a racing cyclist, and had then turned to the manufacture of motorised bath-chairs.

And therein lies the key to such success as was enjoyed by O.E.C. throughout the 'twenties and 'thirties. Both Osborn and Wood were men of exceptional ingenuity, blessed with inventive brains from which emerged many brilliant ideas.

One of the first examples of Osborn "non-conformity" was marketed in 1922 - a 10 h.p. O.E.C. Blackburne Sidecar Taxi, priced at £285 and weighing all of 300 lbs.

The sidecar itself was a totally enclosed cab, four feet in height, and the motorcycle was fitted with a steering-wheel instead of handlebars. Rumour has it that Osborn even toyed with the idea of a speaking-tube (from passenger to driver), but Wood persuaded him that such a device was unrealistic in view of the fact that the driver would have to wear head-phones to make it effective.

It was Fred Wood who had the most fertile imagination. A younger man than Osborn, he was for ever striving to produce some entirely new sort of motorcycle which would succeed in extracting the company from the financial difficulties that beset it almost throughout its chequered career.



A classic example of the 1000cc Jap-engined "big twin" O.E.C. complete with the Duplex steering for which the Gosport machines were world-famous

The O.E.C. Blackburne

In 1927, O.E.C. obtained a patent on the revolutionary Duplex steering mechanism. It was this, perhaps more than anything else, which was to put Osborn on the motorcycle map.

In conjunction with a novel rear-sprung frame, this new form of steering caused a real stir among designers. Described in the technical press as the most unorthodox machine of the year, the O.E.C. Duplex was the first real milestone in the company's history.

During the early days at Gosport, they had contracted to assemble the famous Blackburne engines. This tie-up helped to keep O.E.C. solvent, and for many years they used Blackburne engines in all their models.

Their racing successes were considerable, and it was with an O.E.C. Blackburne that Portsmouth motorcyclist Harry Evans won the 350cc Aggregate Cup at Brooklands in 1925. There were O.E.C. machines being raced in the Isle of Man T.T. throughout the 'twenties, and, in later years, Joe Wright attacked the world motorcycle speed record with a 1000cc O.E.C. J.A.P. He achieved 142 m.p.h.

The frame for this historic machine - like those for all other O.E.C. specials - was designed by Fred Wood and constructed by George Williams. Now retired and living in

Portchester, Mr. Williams joined the company shortly after it was formed. He clearly recalls the sensation caused by the Duplex steering, and the great interest which it created among technically-minded motorcyclists everywhere.

Duplex steering was incorporated in O.E.C.'s next brain-child - a remarkable three-wheeler (not a sidecar outfit or tricycle, but a single-track machine with a large wheel in front and two smaller ones behind) which was built for military use.

With a ground clearance of nearly 12 inches, and both rear wheels driving, the cross-country capabilities of this curious machine were almost limitless. Further, a caterpillar track could be fitted to the twin rear wheels for traversing boggy ground.

One of the 1929 frames constructed by George Williams housed a water-cooled Tinkler power unit - with radiator, engine and gearbox all enclosed in a sheet-metal casing. Mr. Williams recollects it was the biggest attraction at the 1929 Motorcycle Show in Olympia - but he also recollects that it never went into production.

It was just too ambitious. Too unorthodox to find real favour with a conservative public. "Fred Wood's ideas were far ahead of their time," says George Williams, "and we lacked sufficient funds to do them justice."

He often talks about the old days at Lees Lane, before the firm moved to Highbury Street, Portsmouth. A financial tie-up with Glanfield and Lawrence (the well-known motorcycle agents then operating in Lake Road, Portsmouth) gave O.E.C. a new lease of life.

One of the chief testers at Glanfield-Lawrence was Stuart Wallbridge, former sidecar passenger for Wally Waring in grass-track races and sporting trials. He struck up a friendship with George Williams which persists even to this day, and in later years he took employment with the Osborn Engineering Co.

These men are part of O.E.C. history - part of the motorcycle business which once made Osborn a household name. Among older enthusiasts, the mention of Lees Lane, Gosport, still stirs nostalgic memories which will persist as long as motorcycles are made.

The next meeting of the Gosport Historic Records and Museum Society will be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall on Monday the 2nd of April at 7.15 p.m. The Speaker will be Councillor Dr. H. J. Taylor, B.Sc. Subject "Antique Drinking Glasses".

Gosport's Last Gamekeeper

by Major W. B. Kirby (Retd.), Barrister

Turn off Grange Lane into Rodney Close and you will find a private lane leading to Middle Barn Cottage, the home of Cecil Buckingham, Gamekeeper, for more than fifty years. He has remained a Gamekeeper through years of economic change, two World Wars and the changing attitude to field sports. A tall slim figure with a ready smile he looks less than his 68 years and is still a useful shot with his beloved old 12-bore hammer-gun. His cottage is set on the edge of delightful woodlands known as the Wild Grounds which run down the east bank of the River Alver. Few dwellings in Gosport can be set in more beautiful surroundings where a few pheasants are often seen feeding with the chickens.

The name and reputation of Cecil Buckingham first came to my notice as long ago as 1948 when I was stationed at Fort Gomer with the 7th Royal Tank Regiment. We lived on short rations in those austere post-war days but were fortunate to supplement our diet with flat fish from the Moat and Buckingham's pheasants.

Whenever a shot rang out (which was not infrequently) Buckingham would appear shortly afterwards and the miscreant would quickly find himself before the Local Magistrates. He has helped the Police with 150 convictions for poaching. That the figure was not 151 is due largely to my good fortune, for often I managed to evade him by retreating over the bridge into the security of the Fort. Two of my troopers were less fortunate and it was with tongue in cheek (or vice versa) that I attended Court to give evidence of their good character.



I met him later in happier circumstances and in 1967 had the pleasure of taking him to the Game Fair at Calne where he was presented with a Medal awarded by the Country Landowners' Association to mark 40 years' service to Game-keeping.

Cecil Buckingham was for 37 years Gamekeeper to the House family in the days when the estate of 2,000 acres stretched from Fort Brockhurst to Stubbington Lane. Both his father and grandfather were Keepers and even today in the midst of inevitable change he sees more of the natural beauty and wild life than most people.

The Borough Council acquired the Wild Grounds in 1966 and continued to employ Buckingham as a Warden, though his task today is as difficult as ever it was. An engulfing mass of Naval housing has brought about an invasion of children, teenagers and dogs, yet his tireless efforts continue to protect the beauty of the countryside. When I visited him recently he showed me a fearsome weapon - a truncheon-like handle on the end of which was a short chain and a heavy lead ball. A considerable deterrent when apprehending a poacher. Nevertheless, he has been struck down by gun butts and attacked on numerous occasions.

Middle Barn Cottage, which is over 200 years old, has been modernised in recent years providing a delightful home for Buckingham and his wife. In the cosy parlour are portraits of many members of the House family to remind him of the happy relationship which has fostered the interest and enthusiasm he finds in his job.



The wild grounds and Apple Dumpling Bridge

Defence of Stokes Bay against the Spanish Armada

by G. H. and B. E. D. Williams

PART III

To oppose the Spanish if they had succeeded in landing, England had no standing army. Men were recruited mainly when the danger threatened, were given part-time training, and were called out when the Armada approached. Apart from a force for the protection of the Queen and another force which was supposed to be mobile, all were intended to defend their own counties and were equivalent to the Home Guard of World War II (1).

The Earl of Sussex, who as we have seen was one of the joint Lords Lieutenant of Hampshire, had the primary responsibility for organising the military manpower in the Portsmouth area. He produced returns which included "shot" (men with fire-arms), archers and "bilmen" (men with bills - blades on the ends of shafts). He distinguished between furnished (equipped) and unfurnished, and between "serviseable" or able (men ready for service) and otherwise. A return (2) on the basis of an inspection which he made on 21 November, 1587, includes the following:-

Alverstoke and Gosport					
Shot	fur	9	whereof	serviseable	6
				that may be	
				mad serviseable	3
Archers	fur	3		able	
Bilmen	fur	47	whereof	able	30
				unable	17
Bilmen	unfur	43	whereof	able	28
				unable	15

It seems likely that, in addition to these 102 soldiers or potential soldiers, Alverstoke and Gosport produced a considerable number of sailors.

On the following 24 January an inspecting officer, Captain Dawtrey, reported (3) to Sir Francis Walsingham, the Secretary of State, that the Earl of Sussex was slack and dilatory in this work; he added that -

my Lord of Sussex as yt seemeth cannott with contented

mynde bee brought to admytt any mans experience or skill in marshall causes but his owne, yt breedes greate mislike betweene the Lords Lieuutenanntes them selves, and thereuppon devisiion and faction.

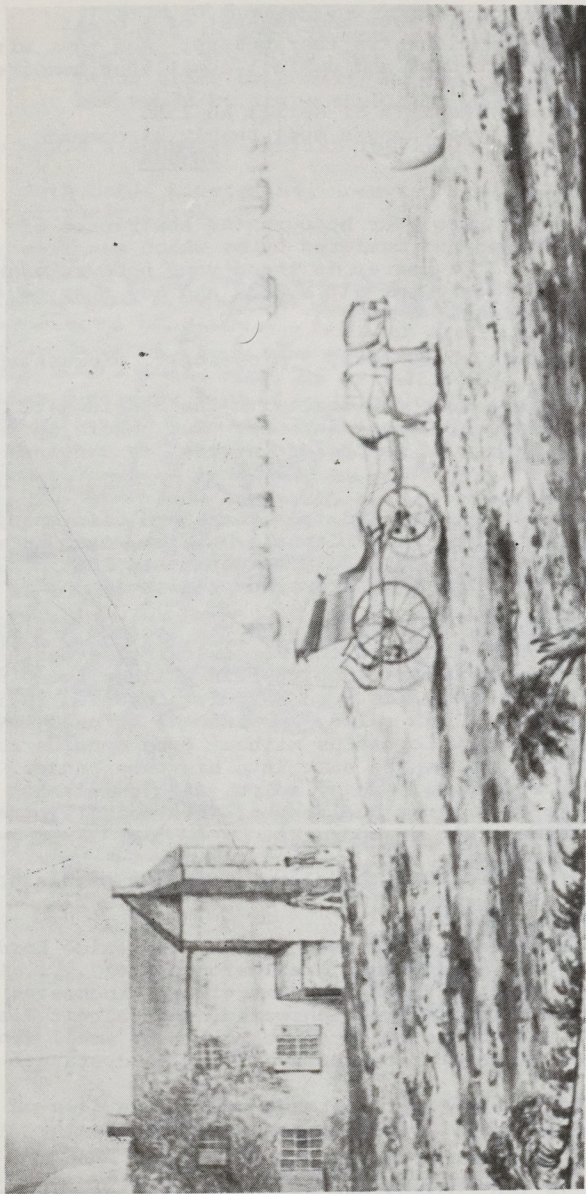
This and possibly other similar reports seem to have reached the Privy Council, and on 22 February the Council wrote to the Earl (4) mentioning them but assuring him nevertheless of their continued confidence in him.

On 2 April, 1588, the Earl replied (5) to the Council -

Right honorable and my moste singulely good Lords: perceiveinge by your honours letters of the 22th of February of some hard reportes made of me touchinge my comisions or negligens in matters that might tend to thadvanncement of her majesties servise and the safetie and deffens of her Realme the same neither hathe nor shall prevaile so far with your honours, as to drawe your honours to condempne me without hearinge. As I can not but render my humble thanks unto your honours for the same whosoever shalbe myne accuser I assure your honours the more they maligne or envie me the more forward I wilbe, and the more they shall seeke to disgrace me, the better thanks and credite I will seeke to deserve

About half the letter deals with his personal position in this vein. He then deals with the supply of equipment and continues -

I have also thought good to signifie unto your honours that where there is a great landinge place, by Hasleword castle called Stoakes baye, and browne downe where within two howres may be landed fortie thowsand men, by reason it is so shoare diepe as a barke of a c : tons may lay her nose a ground, from three quarters flud untill a quarter ebbe: and then goe of againe which containeth in length about three myles, wherof the contrie standeth in great feare of the Enemie and the rather by certaine blynde proseshes and speches they have amongst them selves, of that place: yf letters be directed unto the Lords Lieuutenanntes with the assistanncce of the best and worshipfull of the shore for the makeing of the same place more deffensible against the enemie I think they would for their owne safetie stretch them selves to the uttermost of their powers: And yf it would please her majestie of her gracious benevolens, to geve toward the same two, or three hondred poundes I thinke they would so proceed as they would make it so deffensible as yf the Enemie should land by force he should not enter farther Reffering the same unto your honours moste honorable consyderation, but beinge bold to certefie the



Stokes Bay House and Spithead in the middle or late 18th century. The house stood between the sites of the present Alverbank and Bay House, but nearer to the sea. In the left foreground can be seen the Alver, which flowed to the left of the house, along near the beach to what is now the end of Anglesey Road, and into Haslar Lake; in the 16th century it flowed into the sea at Gilkicker. In the 19th century the house appears to have been used as a public house.

same upon the earnest sute and request of a great
number of the inhabitanntes theraboutes, And thus with
my moste humble thankes and dutie I comit your honours
to the most highest:

from Portismowth the ijth of Aprill Ao 1588

your honors most humbly at command

SUSSEX

Post script

I have also sent unto your honours the abstractes of
all the men viewed and mustered by me which was from :
15 : years to : 75 : yeares to thend your honours might
understand, the Number of all sortes and how they be
devided into bandes

(Note: "c : tons", 100 tons, "prosheshes", discussions.)

In our final article we shall deal with the consideration by
higher authority of Hampshire coast defence. But before we take
leave of the Earl of Sussex it may be of interest to continue his
personal history.

The ill-feeling between him and the other Lord Lieutenant,
the Marquis of Winchester, noted by Captain Dawtrey, came to a
head at an all-day conference on 3 July between them and the
Bishop of Winchester (6). In the afternoon session -

..... the saide Earle disliked with the seconde Article
concerninge the division of the Forces of Portesmouthe,
affirminge that he could fynde therein neither sense nor
reason whereunto the saide Lord Marques annswered that
they were penned by him selfe, and such as he used not
to sende unto theire Lordships without good consideracion,
and thereuppon takinge the same into his owne handes,
said, I will reade the same my selfe, and yf I cannot
fynde therein both sense and reason, then said, I have
noe more braynes then a woodcocke.

The Marquis then complained that the clergy were not receiving
proper military training, and .

..... the said Busshopp annswered, that the saide Lord
Marques had done him therein great wronge, for that
he had mustered them under his nose viz at Winchester
whereunto the saide Marques annswered, that albeit I am
well nosed, yet not so longe as to reache or smell from
Tidworthe to Winchester beinge xvj^{ten} miles dystannte ...

On 24 July, the day before the Armada passed the Isle of
Wight, the Privy Council wrote to the Marquis of Winchester,
instructing him -

..... that in the contentions betweene his Lordship and

Street Names

Recently the Roads and Works Committee of the Borough Council decided that street names of the new roads at Clayhall should be closely associated with the historic site on which they stand. The Gosport Historic Records Society put forward a number of proposals and the following were selected:-

LENNOX CLOSE The names of General Monckton and Lord Palmerston, so closely associated with the fortifications of Gosport, having already been used, it seems appropriate to commemorate that of Lennox. Charles Lennox, third Duke of Richmond and Lennox, was Master-General of the fortifications generally and thus bore the main political responsibility for rebuilding the temporary Fort Monckton in its present permanent form in the 1780's in the face of much opposition in Parliament.



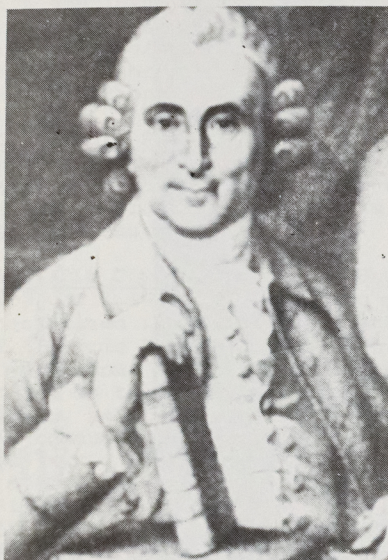
Bishop Samuel Wilberforce



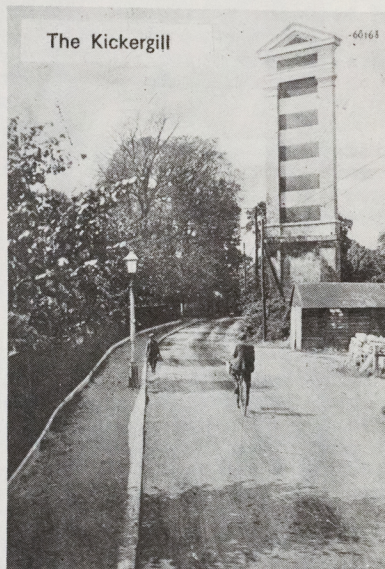
His Grace Charles Duke of Richmond

WILBERFORCE ROAD The site of this road, and indeed most of the Estate, was formerly glebe land of the Rectors of Alverstoke. The best known of the Rectors who held it as glebe was Samuel Wilberforce, Rector from 1840 to 1845, who later became Bishop of Winchester and a great power in the Church of England. The picture of Wilberforce was taken from a cartoon drawn by Pellegrini in 1869 for Vanity Fair and is published by permission of the National Portrait Gallery.

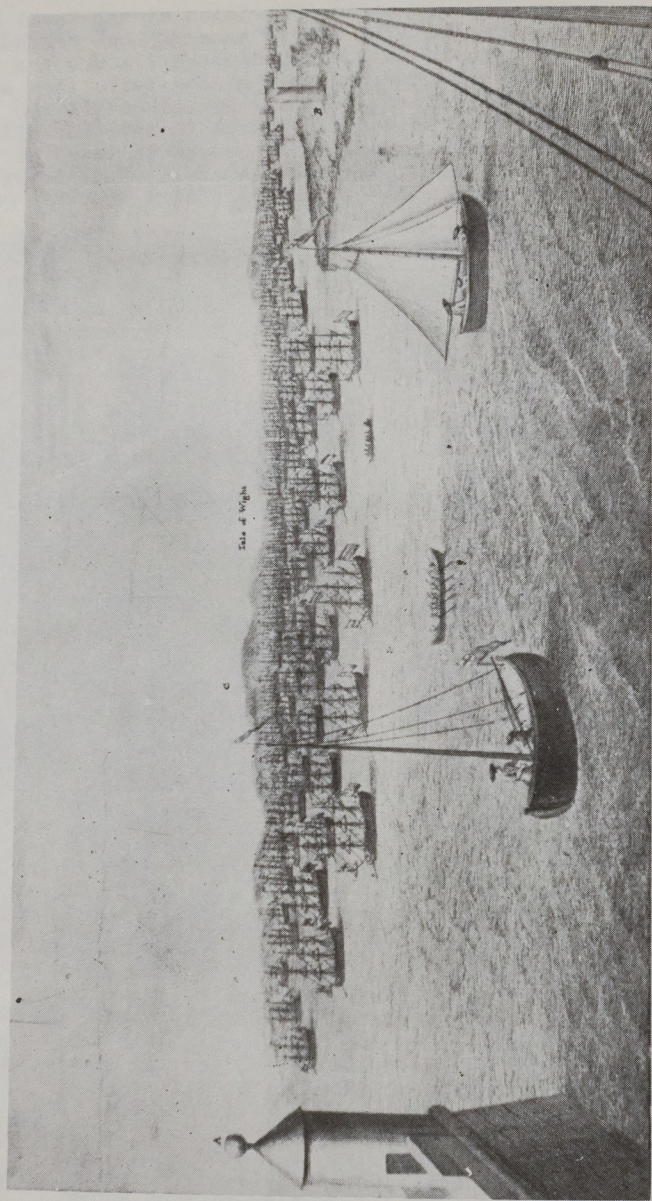
LIND CLOSE Dr. James Lind was Senior Physician at the Royal Naval Hospital, Haslar, from 1758 to 1783 and is known as the "Father of Nautical Medicine". Among his best known discoveries was the fact that the use of lime juice to supplement the foodstuffs then available on ships would prevent scurvy. This was used on British ships for many years and gave rise to the slang term "Limey" for British sailors. This portrait of Dr. Lind by Sir George Chalmers is reproduced by courtesy of the Surgeon Rear-Admiral, R.N. Hospital.



Dr. James Lind



GILKICKER ROAD Robert, Earl of Warwick, the Parliamentary Admiral during the Civil War, erected on the site now occupied by Fort Monckton a land mark called the Gilkicker. This was to be used by ships on conjunction with another called the Kickergill, which stood until 1965 in Clayhall Road. The Gilkicker was demolished in about 1780 to make way for Fort Monckton. Thus the term Gilkicker originally referred to the Fort Monckton site, but it has since been applied to the site of the present Gilkicker Battery. This Battery was built as a single-tier earthwork in the 1850's and was rebuilt as a double-tier in the 1860's.



A View of the Combin'd Fleet of English and Dutch Men of War together with a great Number of Merchant Ships waiting for Convoy, in all upwards of 250 Sail Lying at Spithead, taken from the Platform at Portsmouth July 24 1744.

- A. The Watch Tower at Portsmouth.
- B. The Sea Mark on Ashley Down.
- C. The Gilkicker upon Gosport shoar.

(Original spelling)

HASELWORTH DRIVE Haselworth was an early form of the name Haslar. Haselworth Castle was built in the early 1540's on the site now occupied by Fort Monckton and was largely demolished in about 1560.

LONG WATER DRIVE The Long Water, originally an inlet of the sea, was given its present form as part of the defences of Fort Monckton. Today it is a well known hazard on the golf links.

THE REDAN In front of the Golf Club there is a V-shaped earthwork with the 10th tee on it and the 9th/18th green partly enclosed by it. This was a defensive work technically known as a redan for the protection of the bridge over the moat. It is considerably later than Fort Monckton itself and is probably one of the Palmerston fortifications.

ST. FRANCIS ROAD The neighbouring St. Francis Church was built in 1905 as a Church Institute for Alverstoke Parish as well as for services. In World War II it was used as a canteen for the Forces. It was considerably altered in 1960/1 to make it more suitable for use as a church.

CONSTABLE CLOSE The Royal Engineers were in Fort Monckton from 1892 until 1928. Following a reorganisation in 1905 the Unit there specialised in searchlights and was therefore known as the School of Electric Lighting. The School also took over Haslar Barracks, now the Home Office Detention Centre. It was eventually concentrated in the buildings between Gilkicker and Stokes Bay Pier. The S.E.L., as it was commonly known in Gosport, played a full part in the community life of the Borough until it was disbanded after the last war. It is commemorated here by the name of the Commandant on V.E. Day, Major (acting Lt. Col.) John Hugh Constable, R.A., now retired.

SPITHEAD AVENUE The Spit Sand is a bank extending south-eastwards from the Haslar shore and was formerly known as the Spit. Much of the early posterity of Gosport is due to the proximity of the famous channel and naval anchorage beyond to which the Spit gave its name.

The Gosport Historic Records and Museum Society, with the kind assistance of the Captain of H.M.S. Collingwood and the Local Education Authority, has secured for the Borough two of the old cannon which were used as bollards on the parade ground at H.M.S. St. Vincent. It is hoped that the Roads and Works Committee will be able to use these, together with some old gas lamps already secured by the Society and some old granite sets, to reconstruct one of the lanes leading off the High Street to look as it might have 150 years ago.

Historic Homes

No. 6. National Children's Home

by Sheila Morrison

The National Children's Home in Alverstoke is one of many establishments set up by Thomas Bowman Stephenson towards the end of the 19th century. At that time the conditions of the poor both in towns and in the country were appalling and Stephenson, a Wesleyan Minister in Lambeth, where poverty was extreme, found his congregation consisted of children whom he described as "ragged, shoeless, filthy, their faces pinched with hunger and premature wretchedness". He resolved to work for these youngsters and managed to secure funds to open a home for some of the children. On 9th July 1869 the first home was opened near Waterloo Road and two boys were taken in to be looked after by the appointed Master and Matron. The energy of Stephenson inspired rapid expansion of the Home, but it was his main ambition to open an establishment by the sea.

In 1887 his ambition was realised when land in Alverstoke was given for the Home by Mr. Diggle, who conveyed his small estate of a few acres occupied by an old cottage and four small villas to Stephenson. This became the core of the substantial seaside branch we see today.

The children who came to the Alverstoke Branch of the Home were primarily from London slums. It was hoped that the country air, spiced with sea spray from the Solent, would strengthen the weak children and provide convalescent accommodation for those who were sick and sometimes near death. Later on workers from the Children's Home in London, selected from amongst the large number of Governors, sisters, teachers, mission workers, laundresses, craftsmen and craftswomen who had grown tired and ill from long years of work, were sent to Alverstoke for a holiday. The accommodation occupied by these dedicated people was known as the cottage, and was situated on the land now extensively developed by the Children's Home between Clayhall Road and The Crescent. The cottage could cater for up to five or six guests at a time, and a contemporary report from one of the convalescing workers reads as follows:

"Most of the trees in the orchard are old and all but worn out, but the tree whose shadow I see is quite young. Nursed and wisely watched in spite of blasts laden with briny spray from the Solent it may yet grow into strength ... yielding bushels of fruit, enough perhaps to pay for the yearly feeding of one of the Alverstoke babies."



In 1956 a willing band of volunteers, organised by the late Alderman John Fairhall, took a party of crippled children on a trip to France. They are seen here outside the Town Hall at Boulogne.

In 1888 two small villas were joined into one, named Vanner House after the Treasurer of the Home, and accommodation for 20 - 30 convalescent girls between the ages of seven and fifteen was provided. The stronger children helped in the house, cooking cleaning, sewing, and helping to teach the little children who had lessons in a schoolroom. Some, however, were invalids who would never recover, and in these cases it was the wish of the officers to provide for them a pleasant home beside the sea where their life could perhaps be prolonged a little and be brightened by love and care.

Barlow House was very similar to Vanner, being constructed from the two remaining villas, but it was entirely devoted to very young children, many of them half starved or delicate. It was remarked that:

"In 1888 children had thin white faces; poor wizened little creatures, mites of children to whom death apparently could alone show adequate kindness."

But by 1889 a complete change was seen and the sea air of Stokes Bay had evidently wrought its healing and invigorating influence on the bodies of the poor London children.

Life in the Alverstoke Children's Home was not an institutionalised struggle against suffering. In the summer outings were held

for the children. On one such outing in 1890 four men from the village provided horses and wagons and the children were taken to a farm near Fareham owned by Mr. and Mrs. Pink. There in a large field the children played and had a picnic, being supplied with as much new milk as they wanted from the farm. "Before leaving the children gratified their kind host and hostess by singing some of their merry songs and altogether the treat proved a delightful one to all concerned." In the summer also the children went fruit picking on neighbouring estates where they were provided with drinks and cakes by the landlords.

Another happy annual occasion was the bazaar, which has always been held to raise funds for the Home. For this the children worked to produce items which could be sold to the local people. Despite constant shortage of money, however, three new buildings were constructed at the Alverstoke branch between 1887 and 1900. One of these was used as a hospital, one as a school and one as a chapel. The chapel was a simple wooden building with a corrugated iron roof, but together with the old school and hospital this was demolished earlier this century and replaced with the attractive buildings we now see.

By 1900 Alverstoke National Children's Home had become almost self-sufficient, fulfilling the dreams of the earlier workers at this seaside branch. The old fruit trees continued to give fruit, including quantities of walnuts, and additional land was acquired at Gomer where cattle were kept and hay and potatoes grown. Since that time the Alverstoke Branch has grown from strength to strength and now not only occupies the original estate of a few acres, but also two of the most elegant Anglesey villas.



Alverstoke - Anglesey and Crescent Road

Life's a jest and all things shew it
I thought so once and now I know it

Grave of Elizabeth Derrick, died 1809,
Aged 40. Alverstoake Churchyard.

Grave Mishaps

by G. H. Williams

Recording the inscriptions in Alverstoake Churchyard (see Gosport Records No. 1, p. 16) was arduous, but it was also rewarding and it had its lighter side.

We developed here the technique, for reading an eroded inscription, of shading it with an umbrella if necessary and reflecting the sun along the surface with a mirror. We then started using a large concave shaving mirror to concentrate the sun's rays on a few letters. One of us put the mirror on the ground and stood up to write in his notebook. He then felt an irritation in his leg and found that the sun reflected in the mirror had burnt a hole in his trousers.

Another way of reading an eroded inscription is to shine a torch along it after dark. Two girls passing through the churchyard at night saw one of us kneeling on top of a box tomb and examining it with a torch. They screamed and fled.

We spent much time kneeling on the large flat tombstone of Robert Moubray, Surgeon to the Dockyard, puzzling over its interesting but very badly eroded poem. On a dark winter's night we laboriously deciphered its final lines -

Stop, a last tribute of respect to pay
O'er the cold Stone which shelters Moubray's Clay.

How appropriate

On a number of stones there appear a pick and shovel, the grave-digger's tools, usually as one of the symbols of death. The inscription on one of these stones was partly buried and the recorder started digging in front of it. Before he had reached the date of death he dug into a nest of bumble bees; he therefore hastily filled in the hole. He then searched the burial register and the sextons' book to find the date, and discovered that the deceased was sexton, and therefore grave-digger. But for the bumble bees the particular significance of the pick and shovel on this stone might have escaped us.

On another occasion we partly excavated a large fragment lying obliquely, and uncovered

Forbear my friends to mourn and
While sweetly in the dust I

We thought that the buried words would be "cry" and "lie" and, being more interested in genealogy than in poetry, we did not dig further. About a year later one of us found the lines on a stone in another churchyard; the final words there were "weep" and "sleep", and they probably are the same at Alverstoke.

The next process is to check the recordings against the burial registers and sextons' books, and then return to the inscriptions where there are discrepancies. The sextons' spelling is remarkable. There are some specimens on page 23 of Gosport Records No. 2, but the treatment of surnames is perhaps the most entertaining feature. Saradine becomes Sardine. Barrowman becomes Barwoman. John Abraham becomes John Hebrew, although an earlier Abraham's inscription has the largest lettering in the churchyard. Christian Read Wright becomes Christian Reedwright: perhaps the sexton could not read right.

The heavily annotated transcript of the inscriptions which will be the end product of all this will provide much information about past generations who have lived here, but none about the experiences, such as the above, of those who compiled it.



Alverstoke Church



Older residents will
recognise these two
old Gosport scenes,
but can a new
generation spot where
they were ?

(Answers at the bottom
of Page 32).



SOURCES

GOSPORT - A BALLAD This song was originally composed and sung by Richard Leveridge at the Theatre in Lincolns Inn Field and was called "The Cobbler's End". It is reproduced from a song sheet of about 1765 by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum. The music was used by Henry Man for his song "Gosport - a ballad" and the words are from his 'Miscellaneous Works' published in 1802 after his death in 1799.

THERE ARE SIX TAVERNS IN THE TOWN Brickwoods Ltd. Rate Book for 1838. Directories for 1784, 1792, 1852 - 1897, 1900. Monthly Magazine 1802. Watts Histories of Portsmouth and Gosport for 1800 and 1825. Martin Snape Notes on Gosport printed in 1923. Ordnance Survey Map 1875. Trinity Church Records. The Portsmouth, Portsea and Gosport Literary and Scientific Register Vol. I. 1823 British Museum PP 6047 d. G. C. Rogers Jr., Professor of History at the University of South Carolina, U.S.A. Letters from the Company of Merchants trading in Africa to Erasmus Carver. Letters from the Board of Ordnance concerning Charles Fort, and various old deeds.

GOSPORT'S LAST GAMEKEEPER Picture of Apple Dumpling Bridge by Martin Snape by courtesy of the Director of Portsmouth City Museum.

DEFENCE OF STOKES BAY AGAINST THE SPANISH ARMADA (1) Michael Lewis, The Spanish Armada, 1960, pp. 86-91. (2) Public Record Office SP.12/205 Item 40. (3) SP.12/208 Item 24. (4) J. R. Dasent, Acts of the Privy Council, New Series, XV. (5) SP.12/209 Item 64. (6) SP.12/212 Item 4. (7) J. R. Dasent, op. cit., XVI. Facsimile and transcripts of Crown-copyright records in the Public Record Office appear by permission of the Controller of H. M. Stationery Office.

STREET NAMES Picture of the British and Dutch Fleets at Spithead by courtesy of the Director of Portsmouth City Museum.

THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOME The Children's Advocate Vol. II, 1890 (N.C.H. London). One Hundred Years (N.C.H. Centenary Publication).

GRAVE MISHAPS Initial couplet is from Alverstoke grave A.180: "Grave Mishaps" quoted from John Gay's epitaph in Westminster Abbey composed by himself (Dict. Nat. Biog.). Picture of Alverstoke Church from a painting in the possession of Rev. D. L. Graham, Headmaster of Dean Close School, Cheltenham.

STOKES BAY PICTURE British Museum Add. MSS 33233, reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees. Reference to public house in 1849 Rate Book.

(1) The Avenue, Alverstoke. (2) Railway Bridge from White Hart Lane and Cleveland Road leading to Foster Road.

And the inns are so noble, so neat, and so clean,
If you talk of a mop, they scarce know what you mean,
All infections, however, they keep from their doors,
With tobacco-juice sprinkl'd, to sweeten the floors.
Derry down, etc.

The want of fine buildings and grand colonades
Is made up by fine women, dear, good-humour'd jades,
Though the lasses of pleasure, take black, fair, and brown,
Scarce amount to ten thousand in all Gosport town.
Derry down, etc.

Then the tars who get drunk such civility shew,
That by day light you sometimes in safety may go;
And though, after dark, you are often knock'd down,
There are plasters in plenty in Gosport's good town.
Derry down, etc.

So polite, and so social, the people are here,
They'll converse with their friends once or twice in a year;
By friends, I mean those, of an equal degree,
For why should great folks with inferiors be free?
Derry down, etc.

At balls and assemblies, such wisdom is shewn,
All distinctions and stations are easily known;
For each officer's state, as good breeding contrives,
Is copied with care, and kept up by their wives.
Derry down, etc.

The police is so perfect, such order is kept,
Law and Gospel, long time, have so silently slept,
That e'en Justice herself, does not care to appear,
Having long since been drown'd in a butt of strong beer.
Derry down, etc.

But adieu to his worship, to Gosport adieu,
Though a theme more delightful no muse can pursue;
For the coach is prepar'd, to set off from the Crown,
So I'll finish the praises of Gosport's sweet town.
Derry down, etc.

By courtesy of the Trustees of
the British Museum